567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

631 766 everyone gives what he can. Everyone from the Nabitienga down through his brothers and sisters, close relatives, and their brothers and sisters, in short, anyone even remotely related to the deceased, comes up and offers something. Most often the gift is made up of cowries.

The koupéogo is then returned to the zaongo. Some zom kom (water with flour in it) and some dam (dolo or fermented millet beer) are poured at the door of the antechamber.

The benda and other drummers gather up all the cowries they have received and go a short distance from the house to divide them up.

The benda are expected to give a few cowries to any Yarga, Silmim[illegible]qa, or sayan (1) who happens to pass by during the distribution.

1. Yarga: a Dioula [Diula] of the 'andé [Mande] group. Silmimoaga: on[illegible]who has adopted the customs of the P[illegible]h.

Sayan: blacksmith.

643 428 (b) Fado. This is the share that goes by right to the Mogho Naba from the estate of every kombéré.

[138] The Mogho Naba sends representatives to whom are entrusted a rooster, a sheep, and, depending on the importance of the chief, a cow and 5,000 to 10,000 cowries.

As soon as he has been presented to the Nabitienga, the first envoy of the Mogho Naba says to him: "Nab'kayé ti mog'naba yel tid wa pous' nabitiengh'togo lad reguib' lokon'wa tib laguemb taba ti ya yel koudgo (Such-and-such a chief having died, the Mogho Naba sends us to deliver his condolences to the Nabitienga and to request of him that the quiver of the naba be turned over to us so that it may be placed beside those of his ancestors, as is the custom)."

The Nabitienga thanks them and orders the loko [quiver] to be brought out at once. It is placed on the ground, and sacrifice is made, in turn, of the chicken, the sheep, and even the cow sent by the Mogho Naba.

631 643 428 766 All of these preliminaries are only the beginning, and when they are completed, the emperor's first envoy orders the Nabitienga to go out into the sunshine so that the fado [share for the Mogho Naba] may be claimed. The Nabitienga complies with the request. Thereupon the first envoy says to him through a messenger: "Mogh' Naba yé tid wa reg fado, ya nig'tousri (1,000 head of cattle), pissi tousri (1,000 sheep), bouss'tousri (1,000 goats), foutou tousri (1,000 garments)," etc. To which the Nabitienga replies: "Tond ba sin ki a ka bas roumsi ne arzek'yé (our late father left neither animals nor other wealth sufficient to satisfy the demands of the Mogho Naba)."

The messenger reports the reply to the emperor's representatives. The relatives of the Nabitienga go [139] to gather together a wanka (hoe), a laré (ax), and a goégo (sickle), and then they tell the nayiridamba (representatives) to go into the antechamber where all of the wealth is piled up. The nayirdamba [sic] send in some soroné who come back and report on what is there. Then they ask the Nabitienga for the fado a second time, and this time it is given to them in the form of the following articles: a robe, a pair of trousers, bracelets, fodo, rouamba (ornaments of the napagha), an ample robe, a pair of slippers, a knife (zangoégo), some salt, some cowries, kalgo (soumbala) balls, nemdo (dried meat), moui (rice), etc.

The envoys are housed for a whole week by the Nabitienga, aided by the inhabitants and his relatives.

On the eighth day, before taking leave of his guests, the Nabitienga slaughters a cow, has large quantities of saghbo and beer prepared and sheep killed, gives clothing to all the envoys of the Mogho Naba, offers them up to 50,000 cowries, depending on their importance, etc.

He has a horse saddled with his father's saddle, and the animal is tethered in front of the antechamber.

One of the nayirdamba unties the horse and walks three times around the house of the deceased naba. The person who mounts the horse is given liguidi (cowries) and clothing and the fez of the naba. He is entitled to keep all this after his return to Ouagadougou, after he has reported to the authorities. The horse becomes the property of the Mogho Naba and is turned over to the Wedranga Naba (personal equerry of the king).

562 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself
584 with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[173] [173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet
583] beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the
428 women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of
562 the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age.
768 However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so
[177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

643 imposes a heavy obligation on the chief. He is expected to in-
241 vite the emperor's principal bodyguards (samand'kamba) -- and there are many of them -- to a meal. He is also required to furnish a basket of millet for sowing the field of the Mogho Naba when the first rains come.

652 Utilization of the produce of the emperor's fields. As noted
644 in an earlier chapter [255] under Labor required of Mossi subjects by their naba," the Mogho Naba does not use the millet from his own field. The produce is used to feed the horses, to support the pages and samand'kamba, and especially to make beer on the festive days known as the tinsé and basgha of the king.

[256] Chapter 17

Inheritance and Rights of Succession among the Mossi

●428 We have dealt with the question of inheritance at considerable length in the chapter on "Customs and Enthronement of Mossi Chiefs." We return to the subject because it seems necessary to clarify certain details of this question which is so important from the legal point of view.

The opening of succession. The succession is open upon the death of an individual, but property is not passed until after the funeral ceremonies (for all that concerns funerals, see the section on "Death").

Why is there a delay in taking possession of the property? As we have seen above in many chapters, the Moaga is superstitious. An old belief has it that to take possession of the property of the deceased before the funeral is celebrated will bring certain death to the heir or will cause some calamity for the whole family.

Further, since all the members of the family must be assembled for the funeral observances, the inheritance is well publicized, and [257] no one can later claim to have been defrauded.

Requirements for succession. In order to inherit, the following requirements must be met.

1. To be born before the succession is opened.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 431 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 562 184 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

428 custom which decrees that he likewise inherits all of his father's responsibilities as head of the family.

428 562 Do daughters and wives share in an estate? Daughters have no share in an estate although their brothers may give them trifling gifts.

Wives never inherit from their husbands. They can only benefit indirectly as the representatives of their young sons. On the contrary, since the wife is considered a piece of property, [259] she is actually a part of the estate to the same extent as the rest of the property left by the deceased.

428 Disposition of an unclaimed estate. Only the canton chief is qualified to inherit the property of a deceased person having no known relatives.

Rights and Obligations Governing Property in the Family

421 Property is owned individually. Individual property is strictly a private matter. The head of the family has no rights over property acquired individually by the women and children or by other relatives under his rule. They may dispose of their possessions as they see fit. A mother may do some trading to provide savings for her children. The head of the family may not use such property under any circumstances without the consent of the true owner.

428 593 Does a husband inherit from his wife? A husband has no right to his wife's property. He cannot even claim it if she dies childless, since in that case it goes to her own relatives (brothers or sisters) or, failing that, to their children.

428 Aside from their rights in their father's estate, children inherit their mother's property.

[426] When the head of a family borrows cowries from [260] a member of his compound, he must repay the loan with a given time. His own property is inalienably his as long as he lives, and then it makes up his estate, along with his wives.

768 428 Disposition of a house after death. When the head of a compound dies, the establishment is not destroyed. It automatically passes to the heirs, that is, to his sons or, if he has no legitimate

768 heirs, to his brothers. If the deceased was the keeper and guard-
428 ian of the family fetish, it is taken to the home of his eldest brother or to a person designated by custom.

We have seen, however, that the Moaga will not live in a home without consulting a soothsayer. Therefore, if the spirits are not favorable to the heir, the home is turned over to the other sons or to the brothers of the deceased. Besides, in many cases the eldest son is already married and the head of a family and already has his own home. He then lodges his dakompa (young unmarried brothers) or one of his uncles in his father's home.

428 Acceptance or repudiation of inheritances. Consequences.
426 To accept and receive an inheritance involves the obligation to pay the debts and claims against it. Among the Mossi, an inheri-
672 tance is never refused since a refusal does not free one from the obligation to pay the debts of the deceased. Relatives always collaborate, not because of any feeling for common property -- which [261] does not exist, as we have seen above -- but out of respect for the principle of collective responsibility which has been developed in the interests of public order. Creditors will naturally claim their due first from the legitimate heir, but if the estate cannot meet its obligations, all of the close relatives are jointly responsible.

428 The estate does not include any gifts made to members of the family by the deceased during his lifetime.

Wills. Among the Mossi, a will is always made orally.

In the presence of his relatives -- uncles and brothers -- and of his neighbors, who have been assembled for the occasion, the testator makes known his last wishes to his legitimate heir, who will have full rights as his testamentary successor. However, in the event that the will is intended to disinherit the legitimate heir and if for some reason or other he is not present, the testator will entrust the execution of his last wishes to the oldest member of the family present.

Disinheritance of the heir presumptive. In the presence of witnesses and under the conditions indicated above, the testator explains his reasons for disinheriting the heir presumptive. In the event that the reasons seem insufficient, the witnesses will seek

428 to change his mind. If, however, he absolutely refuses to heed their protests, they will not make an issue of it, but when the time comes to [262] apportion the estate, the testamentary arrangement to disinherit the heir presumptive will simply be declared null and void.

If the heir presumptive was disinherited for any of the causes for disqualification listed above or because he had committed adultery with one of his father's wives or a wife of someone in the family, the estate is given to the next in the line of succession as determined by Moaga custom.

Right to make a will. All who own property may make wills.

Revocation of wills. Wills may be revoked if the testator so desires. He has only to make a simple oral declaration of changed intention in the same manner as that described above.

Chapter 18

Circumcision.- Do the Mossi Practice It?

304 Circumcision is highly esteemed among the Mossi. Some
184 colonial officials, because of their ignorance of Mossi customs, have claimed that neither circumcision nor excision was practiced. One must be able, indeed, to distinguish between the Moaga, the Boussanga, and especially the Nionioga. Although the three groups are related, they have different customs.

304 Circumcision, which is done according to precise rules, is carried out here in virtually the same way as it is among the Kassonké of Kayes.

The ceremony must originally have been imposed on the
304 Dagomba (of whom the Mossi are descendants) by Islam. Now,
626 however, young men seek to have themselves circumcised, not for any religious reason, but rather to avoid the ridicule of their friends and, especially, the scorn shown by Mossi women for any uncircumcised man.

304 We shall attempt to describe below the circumcision ceremony among the Mossi.

After the harvest, toward the end of November, the young men state their wish to be circimcised. Since the cost of supporting

584 If the girl absolutely refuses to go to her betrothed, her father
[562] tries to persuade her but does not use force. If the girl persists in her refusal in spite of everything — this is extremely rare — the father returns to the betrothed any money he may have borrowed, but he does not return anything that was given him spontaneously. If the father happens to die after he has pledged his daughter, his heir may not retract the promise and give his sister or niece to another man,
● [428] but he will from then on receive the gifts himself. If the betrothed man dies, his heir gets the girl promised to the father, with the condition that he will continue to pay the bride price.

584 Contrary to the situation in European countries, the woman, con-
583 sidered as valuable property, is paid for; it is not she who brings a dowry, but the man who wants her as his wife. If a man has an eye on a friend's daughter, he goes to visit the father even though the girl may still be a babe in arms. He is careful not to state what he has in mind. He comes sometimes with a few cowries, sometimes with a chicken, a piece of salt, perhaps even a sheep. The child's father understands, and when he has some work to be done, a field to be weeded, millet to be threshed, huts to be roofed, he makes it known to the suitor, who hastens to work for the man whose son-in-law he should like to become.

After a time, the father says to the suitor: "You have treated me well. I am pleased with you. I will treat you well." The suitor understands and becomes even more assiduous. He sends his friends and on every festive occasion he presents the father of his intended with a few chickens. There is no outright promise, no betrothal in the usual sense of the term. Sometimes the father has financial difficulties, pressing debts, or he has seen a fine garment he should like to buy, and he has a request for money conveyed to his friend. The latter knows that he is loaning without return, or rather loaning against the girl. He refuses only if he is actually unable to furnish the sum; for if negotiations were ever to be broken, the child's father would have to return the money advanced, and this would greatly embarrass him and thus prevent him from profiting through the transaction. In any case, it is extremely rare for a promised girl not to be given to the man who has made the first advances and who has been favorably received. A father who should promise his daughter to a man after receiving gifts for some time from another would be held in very poor esteem and forced to return any money he might

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
[761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[262] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the kouré, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his doré, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 587 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband.

428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 592 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

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belonging to him, he can be relied upon to share with the members of the lineage if this should be necessary.

613 Capital goods in the form of houses, granaries, and fields are the property of the lineage. Individual rights are limited to temporary use 423 and custodianship but are passed on to others when a general shift in residence and role follows the death of a senior member of the lineage. Although property is passed on in accordance with the rules of descent in the lineage, part of the property redistributed represents the product 428 of the labor of the lineage as a consanguineal kin group. For, as has been 613 indicated, the labor of the wives, who are not lineage members, is as important as that of their husbands and children.

241 The lineage head discusses the coming year with the other elders, and an over-all production plan is made out. They decide what fields are to 613 be left fallow, what ones are to be planted to cotton and the varieties of millet, what lands may be used by individuals desiring to plant a cash crop, and what, if any, land may be loaned to neighboring lineages or to in-laws. With the approach of the first rains, all economically active men and women go to their fields to prepare them for planting, leaving behind in the village only the old people and the children who are still too small to assist in the fields or tend their fathers' animals.

423 A considerable portion of the land within the limits of a Mossi village is under the direct control of the village chief (*Tenga Naba*) and the 632 earth custodian (*Tenga Soba*), the local representatives of political and supernatural authority. This land is used for the public way, for the market place, and for burial grounds and latrines. Except for that which is too poor for any purpose, all available land within several miles of a village is put under cultivation.

241 *Ki* is the generic name which the Mossi give to the millet, which is the basic product in their economy and which receives the largest single 243 allocation of land and labor of any Mossi economic activity. Two kinds of millet are planted, a large-grained variety (*kenda*) and a small-grained variety (*kanu*). Millet is the first crop to be planted after the rains have begun. Small- and large-grained millet seeds are frequently mixed and sown in the same field. Small-grained millet may also be sown in the same field with a white bean (*benga*). A "tired" field may be left fallow for five, ten, or fifteen years. When it is first replanted, it will be seeded to millet for the first three years. The fourth year it may again be put into millet, but if the previous crop was not good, cotton will be planted. Usually, a Mossi farmer plants cotton for two years, millet for three, then groundnuts, more cotton, then two more years of millet. It is 241 believed that cotton renews the soil because of the intensive cultivation [824] required: the earth is brought up into hillocks and turned over; after picking, the plant may be turned under and left to enrich the soil.

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[317] In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

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[428] In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

[435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece. He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

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467 Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

596 326 Are those blacksmiths who live in groups unaltered remnants of the ancient population as it existed prior to the Dagomba invasion? Are they autochthonous? Should their statement that they are not Mossi be interpreted in this light? This is probable, although by no means certain. In any case, the family among them is of the purest patriarchal cast.

596 326 592 Among them, all households belonging to a family occupy the same soukala. When a young man marries, he remains in the family soukala.

/543/ During the winter season, the occupants of the soukala work in the fields of the head of the soukala from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. From three o'clock on, they till their own little individual plots.

During the dry season, they all work together at the blacksmith's trade with the head of the soukala, and all profits devolve to the latter. They work from sunrise to sunset.

The head of the soukala provides them with food throughout the year. As for their clothing, they procure it themselves with the returns from their little plots. The same applies to bracelets, jewels, etc. (as for grigris, they do not like them).

The head of the soukala buys each man his first wife, and in return gives in marriage all the daughters of the soukala.

596 428 326 When the head of a soukala dies, it is his younger brother who takes command of the soukala. He also takes all the goods, fields, livestock, slaves, cowries, and the tools used to extract and work the iron. The sons get nothing. Everyone remains in the soukala.

When the supply of brothers has been exhausted, the oldest son in the whole soukala receives the inheritance.

If no males remain in the soukala, the sisters come first in line before the daughters if they have the same father and mother as the deceased, but after /them/ if they were born of the same father only. They take half of the movable property and give half to the daughters. They apportion their share evenly among themselves. The soukala and fields go to the village chief. If there are no sisters born of the same father and mother, the inheritance goes to the daughters, and next in line to the sisters born of the same father as the deceased. If there are neither sisters nor daughters, the whole estate goes to the village chief.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

596 5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
428 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is, his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

592 Now, here is the second variant:
596 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

592 2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
596 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
584 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the family head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

596 4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
428 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

596 428 significance vis-à-vis family property in this second Mossi family type. /547/ Thus, my informant stresses that here family property still has greater significance than private property, but at the same time he adds that in every inheritance he witnessed, the soukala always went to the oldest son, no matter what its origin. He corroborates this with information about his own family, as follows:

He lives, he says, with five wives, two daughters, two unmarried cousins who are the sons of one of his father's brothers, an unmarried cousin who is the son of one of his father's sisters, a nephew who is the son of his own sister, in short, twelve persons including him.

The soukala where he lives once belonged to his father and was built by the latter alone. He has thus inherited it, even though his father had a younger brother.

Incidentally, the brother got nothing, since my informant's father left nothing beside the soukala, no family property or private worth much.

To whom will the soukala go when he dies? Since he has no son, he replies, it will go to his younger brother (he has a younger brother who lives in a separate soukala). Supposing he had a son, however? Then it would go to his son.

I counter that it should go to his brother, since he did not build it himself but inherited it from his father (that is, from his own and his brother's common father), in accordance with the rule he mentioned earlier. He nevertheless holds, however, that it is not so, that younger brothers never did inherit a soukala, I cannot make him alter his position.

596 423 178 This gives us a living example of how the Mossi family has changed. In the old days, family property went along with the family headship to the younger brother. The soukala, for example, figured in almost every case among the family property, either because the family had given it ready made to the young man, or simply because the family had helped him build it. A soukala was private property only when the young man had built it altogether by himself (a very unusual case). Later, the soukala came to be considered private property when it had been built by the young man

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the
[431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a
431 soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers
626 gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

593 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

428 3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
593 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

428 593 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 578 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 578 644 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 593 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 593 587 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 593 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields. As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

428 593 184 Actually, those shares vary from region to region among the Mossi. Thus, in certain areas, the oldest son gets the soukala, the fields, two thirds of the livestock, cowries, and money, all the slaves and grain, as well as clothing, jewelry, weapons, horses, etc. The other sons get the remaining goods. The daughters get nothing. As for the wives, the oldest son takes three quarters and the other sons one quarter. In such cases, the eldest son is much more heavily favored than in the cases mentioned earlier.

At Kombisiguiri, this is even more accentuated. The oldest son may keep everything if he wishes. He may also give something to the other sons of the deceased or to the latter's brothers.

In short, at the stage /of evolution/ with which we are dealing, the transmission of property ranges from a complete and absolute law of primogeniture to an uneven sharing heavily tipped toward the eldest son.

593 736 Let us add that when the eldest son receives an estate, if his brothers are not yet of an age to be married, he keeps them at his home, in his own household (this is why, although Mossi households in principle include only a husband, his wives, children, and slaves, sometimes they also contain young unmarried brothers). In the morning they work for him, and in the afternoon they work their own little plots. The older brother provides them with food at all times, but not with clothes. They must procure their clothing with the returns from their own little plots. When they reach marriageable age, the older brother buys them a wife and helps them settle on their own.

429 543 When the head of a soukala dies leaving only small sons, his younger brother takes all the property for the time being but saves it for the legitimate heirs. When the eldest son of the deceased has grown up, the brother leaves the soukala and returns to his own former one, taking only his own belongings. /552/ At that time, all the real estate and movable property devolve to the oldest son and partly to the other sons.

428 593 If the head of a soukala leaves no sons but only brothers and daughters, the inheritance is shared between his younger brother and his daughters. The younger brother takes the soukala, the fields, and the wives. He leaves his own soukala and settles in that of the deceased, where he brings all his belongings. He puts up either a

438 593 son or a young brother of marriageable age in his former soukala. The daughters, however, get the movable property such as slaves, livestock, grain, cowries, etc. (with the exception of wives).

The oldest daughter takes the largest share. Out of ten beeves she will take six (if there are three daughters, for example) and the two younger daughters will take two each. Out of four slaves she will take two, and the two younger daughters will take one each. Out of 1,000 cowries, the oldest will take 600, the other two 200 each.

The same thing applies if there are no brothers but only daughters and brothers' sons, since the latter have the same rights as their fathers. Thus, it is the eldest son of the younger brother who inherits along with the daughters of the deceased.

593 In this third variant of the Mossi family, in short, the bonds that connect the various households in the family are now of two kinds only:

1. There are the religious bonds, since the head of the entire family remains the high priest of this collectivity.

593 672 2. There are also the judicial bonds (collective responsibility of the family in case of injury done to other people).

"If a man is in debt," says Moulins, p. 34, op. cit. /Monographie du cercle de Ouagadougou/, "his family is held responsible for payment. If he commits a misdemeanor, his family is held responsible for financial reparation.

"If he commits a crime of murder, one of his relatives will be put to death in his place if he has not himself been seized (at least, this is what happened prior to our occupation).

"When the head of the family is served a complaint against one of the individuals under his authority, he appeals first, of course, to the guilty party himself if the latter owns /553/ any property, then to the soukala to which the man belongs, then to the one headed by his nearest relative, etc. Vis-à-vis third parties, however, the family itself, as a whole, is held responsible for reparation.

"The formidable responsibility devolving to the family entails, as its logical counterpart, putting at its disposal, powers sufficient

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

● 428 567 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described [171] up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

567 178 Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi, the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowadays, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[426] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
428 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

634 621 the nomination of the village chiefs, who were always selected from the family of the preceding chief.

● 428 631 Let us add that in principle, and all other things being equal, it was the eldest son of the deceased chief who was supposed to succeed his father, and this applied to village chiefs as well as to canton chiefs, province chiefs, and the Moro Naba. This principle ran counter to the true patriarchal principle where the younger brother is always the natural and legitimate heir of the deceased brother. The requirements of a warlike existence had probably forced it upon the Mossi at the time of their conquest of the Dagomba and Mossi territories.

This principle of direct inheritance (rather than collateral inheritance) had been restricted, however, by the powers of higher authorities represented by canton chiefs vis-à-vis village chiefs, province chiefs vis-à-vis canton chiefs, the Moro Naba vis-à-vis the province chiefs, and the electoral college of the high dignitaries vis-à-vis the future Moro Naba. In short, the warriors' principle of inheritance from father to eldest son ruled among the Mossi in the power sphere, but had to give way to the exigencies of government whenever necessary.

631 Let us not believe that the third principle, namely the consent of the people involved, was altogether unknown among the Mossi (the consent of the village inhabitants in the case of a village chief, of the canton notables in the case of a canton chief, of the province notables in the case of a province chief, etc.) This third principle, however, was the least important, the least taken into account, the least actualized from a mere potential. /577/ Whenever it clashed with the others, it had to give way.

635 634 624 Let us add that the majority of Mossi chiefs were aided by representatives called baloum.

"The province chiefs," says the Monographie, "the majority of canton chiefs, and even the chiefs of a few important villages, are aided by one or several baloum or palace masters, whom they choose freely. These are sometimes former captives, but most frequently they are common natives or former soroné, and they are never nakomsé. Their function is not hereditary. It grants them the right to substitute for the naba, to speak and act in his name."

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly, it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for him-
●428 self. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the
644 "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.
596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of
592 a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother, cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of
571 a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

428 (whether born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) who benefits, and sometimes the eldest brother among those who were born of the same father and mother, but this sharing is very uneven. The two brothers who are the eldest in the senses just described get considerably more than the other cosharers.

428 571 After the distribution, the men usually remain in the same compound and also in the same work group as before. Upon the death of household heads, however, and especially of heads of work groups, the work groups (which have expanded gradually with new births) alter their constitution and divide. These work groups indeed grow constantly (by the natural process of birth) and also dwindle constantly (by the natural process of death and new divisions). As for the zaka, they are not completely stable either since new ones are established as time goes by in proportion to the growth of population.

428 Let us add a few details on inheritance.

Small male children do inherit, but their share is not handed to them. It is handed to the brother who inherits the mother of these children. When they are grown, their mother's new husband will deliver it to them.

[562] Daughters do not inherit.

Women never inherit. On the other hand people do inherit from them.

Transmission of specifically private property. —A case of this type is the inheritance of a wife. As we have seen earlier, the goods of a deceased woman go to her children, sons or daughters. Boys' things go to the boys, girls' things to the girls. All the boys get something, but the oldest son is very much favored. All the girls get something, but the oldest daughter is very much favored. When there are no children, the woman's inheritance goes to her own family and not to her husband or to her husband's family. /272/

Another case of this type is the death of a boy or young man. If he has a brother, the latter inherits. If he has no brother, his father does. Sometimes the father entrusts the goods to the mother to be given to a future child.

In the event of a young girl's death, her sister inherits. If she has no sister, the mother inherits. If the mother died first, her family inherits (that is, the mother's younger sister).

Finally, another case in point is the death of a Mossi bachelor. His brother who inherits or, lacking one, his brother's son.

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.
848 Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he
431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos.—A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

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643 the sons of the ruling family, the *nakomcse*, formed a noble class, above
565 classes of commoners, serfs, and slaves. Classed among the commoners in many villages were the descendants of former district chiefs who had been deposed by the Moro Nabas. The reason that the rulers gave for the deposal of district chiefs was always disloyalty; but everyone recognized that this was an excuse whereby the reigning sublineage deposed older branches and provided positions for its cadet or collateral branches.

631 The governing hierarchy of the Mossi was a lineage with its com-
613 ponent minor and minimal branches. Like most lineages, this ruling lineage possessed an ideology that all of its members had equal access to its corporate assets. The most important asset of this lineage was, of course, its sovereignty, its right to rule. The *nam* is the symbol of Mossi sovereignty and is described by them as "that force of God which enables a mere man to rule over other men." The *nam* was the possession of Wedraogo, the group's founder, and of Moro Naba Wubri, the first ruler of Wagadougou, and this possession became the patrimony of all their descendants. This being the case, the ruling chief of any village, district, principality, or kingdom did not own the *nam* of that area; he was considered the temporary holder of it, and on his death it reverted to the collective descendants of the royal ancestors.
428 A man did not have the right to pass the *nam* on to any person because
424 it was not his. Whenever a Mossi chief was being considered for office his commoner electors asked him the following questions: "Before his death, did Naba X designate anyone to replace him as chief?" This question was asked three times, and the candidate responded three times: "No! The Naba did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is a blind man or a leper."

In actuality, this vaunted equality of access to the *nam* by all members of the ruling lineage was a legal fiction. And despite the fact that all the nobles declared that they could go to Wagadougou to seek the *nam* whenever a chief died, in reality only the members of the dead chief's minimal lineage (often the descendants of his grandfather) presented themselves as candidates. Indeed, of all the candidates, the eldest son of the dead ruler was the one most often chosen to be

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all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patrimony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name, announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system.

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There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[8] These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance.

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There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their

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[428] power and authority were inherited by their families in the same manner as among Mossi lineages.

634 The last important category of Mossi chiefs included men who ruled
622 over slave and serf villages. These men were themselves the descendants of slaves and serfs, for no free-born Mossi were placed in such posts. Needless to say, these chiefs were never lineally or collaterally related to the
[602] district chiefs, and therefore were never nobles. However, they might be affinally related to district chiefs, and in such cases the relationship was often of some political value.

It must be emphasized that once a man was made chief, he was respected, if not honored, by all the people of the district. In some districts, the Dapore Naba and the Baglere Naba, chiefs of two categories of serfs, were among the most valued assistants of the Kombere Naba. The only
[565] people who sometimes refused to honor the village chiefs were the nakomce,
[778] who were the holders of the district nam. Nevertheless, they were censored by the Kombere if they were disrespectful to his subordinates. No district chief could allow his government to be jeopardized by the maltreatment of persons who served it. In any conflict between the nam and the kin group, the supremacy of the nam was always maintained.

613 Every Mossi ruler, whether he held the nam of a kingdom, principality,
631 district, or village, was *ipso facto* also *Boodkasma* (literally, "family head")
622 of the local segment of his boodoo. The word boodoo refers to patrilineal groups that anthropologists would normally call clans, maximal lineages, major lineages, or minor lineages. The Mossi do not make any terminological distinction between these levels of their segmentary lineage system. Nevertheless, they recognize and use the status differences between these units to limit the access of each unit to the corporate assets of the boodoo. Their major social distinction is drawn between the minor lineage, which is also called boodoo, and its component minimal lineages. Each minimal-
[596] lineage unit is called a *babissi* (literally, "father's brother"), and is really a large extended family composed of relatives who had a common ancestor, three, four, or at most five generations ago.

643 The Mogho Naba, for example, was head of his babissi as well as ex
613 officio head of the entire royal clan. Those rulers who claimed equality with him claimed that they, not he, were the true heads of the royal clan and the "direct" descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. As a function of their political position, the many princes and district chiefs were heads of their own babissi and of the maximal lineage to which their babissi be-
631 longed. Like the Mogho Naba, they were the ex officio heads of all members
613 of their boodoo who lived in their territory and who claimed descent from the same royal ancestors.

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fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child.

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions.

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and went to Djiba when his grandfather died and his father was installed as Mogho Naba.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

concept of justice. To reach the central market, the people of Donse village used a path that ran across the fields belonging to two of their fellow villagers, Zami and Isa. The path was normally open all year round, even during the planting season, because neither man wished to inconvenience the villagers. But one day the two men quarreled, and shortly thereafter Isa announced his decision to close his path during the planting season. He said he feared that "people would steal his growing crops" if he left it open. Moreover, he wanted to use the path to increase his planting area. Zami objected to what he considered an insult, and, believing that Isa had violated a customary rule, used the path. In doing so, he crushed several stalks of millet. Isa witnessed his action, and the men came to blows. When the village chief proved unable to reconcile them, they were brought before the district court.

The district chief ruled that according to Mossi custom, a man could close a path during the planting season to prevent people from stealing his crops. But if he closed a path, he had to provide an alternative route, for no one had the right to restrict the movements of others. The chief sympathized with Isa over the small size of his field, but insisted that he provide a path across or around it. However, he persuaded Zami to let Isa use a portion of his land in compensation for the new path.

The chief tried to reconcile the interests of Isa and Zami with those of the entire village. He apparently felt that reconciliation was more useful than judgment. He did uphold the law that the right of passage is mandatory, but also maintained that a man has the right to protect his property from potential thieves. At the same time, he made it clear that although a man may defend his own rights, he may not do so by infringing upon the rights of others.

The same principles seem to have been upheld in the following case, also recorded in 1956, which is interesting because it illustrates the flexibility of Mossi law. A man named Hammadou died, leaving fifteen cows as his legacy. Moussa, his eldest son and principal heir, distributed the cows among his father's other sons and male relatives, but did not give any to his father's daughter. Strictly speaking, he was right to exclude her, because a woman was not supposed to inherit any of her father's property unless he had no living lineal or collateral relatives. In practice, however, a daughter always received part of her father's legacy, especially if he had been wealthy. Hammadou's daughter therefore felt slighted, and when she received no redress from Moussa or her other male relatives, she had the case taken to the village chief. He could not resolve it, and referred it to the district chief.

When Moussa was called before the district chief, he explained that his

father had given the woman a silver bracelet before he died, and that the babissi felt that this was sufficient, since she had a husband to provide for her. Furthermore, Moussa said that the inheritance had already been distributed, and that any redistribution would impose a hardship on all concerned.

Interpreting the inheritance law according to common practice, the chief ruled that the milk from a man's cattle was for *all* his children, regardless of sex, and that the fact that the father had formerly given the daughter a bracelet should not have influenced the distribution of the inheritance. The chief stated that the woman should receive at least one cow, and that if the defendant did not agree, he (the chief) would recall all the animals and supervise their distribution. He did not feel that he had to state the principles by which he had reached his judgment, for the consensus among the people of the district was that the heir was trying to take advantage of the law for his own selfish interests. Rather than appeal to Ouagadougou, Moussa and his babissi accepted the verdict.

On the basis of these and other cases, we are led to the conclusion that the Mossi felt that law and the judicial process should serve to reconcile people and to maintain what was commonly considered to be social justice.

Most of the cases at the district court were tried in the same manner as those cited above. Cases involving relations between men and women were the most common. This is paradoxical, because the district chief tried to avoid any involvement with such cases. For every domestic case tried by the district chief, five others were sent back to the village or lineage level. Even so, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the cases tried by Mossi district chiefs ultimately concerned women. The most common case of this type was the alleged refusal of a woman to return to her husband.[8] If the judge found that another man had encouraged her to leave her husband, he ordered her to return to him and warned her and the man about the possibility of serious difficulty with her husband's relatives. On the other hand, if the chief found that the woman had left a cruel husband who threatened to harm her or her relatives, he warned the husband not to carry out his threats. The Mossi had no bride price; thus, a woman's family was not faced with the problem of restitution. Sometimes, an angry husband did demand that his wife's family return the gifts (*pogopossum*, "thanks for the woman") he had given them from time to time—e.g., at funerals—and they complied.

Adultery cases were next in frequency at the district court. A man convicted of adultery with another man's wife was either warned to leave her alone or fined a sheep or a goat. He was also liable to be put in stocks for

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631 651 643 114 [648] [669] because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 645 692 651 [431] The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 651 634 768 [428] The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 645 651 439 [487] The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking